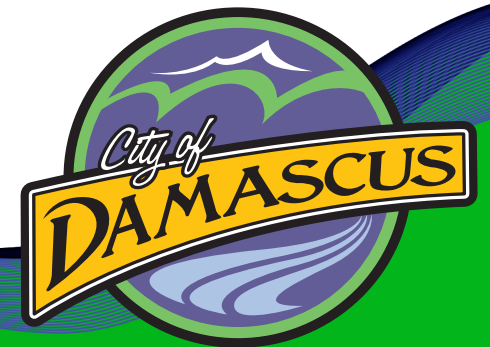




Details of the Comprehensive Plan can be found on the City's Website at www.damascusoregon.gov

Your Questions Answered

The 2014 Council Referred Comprehensive Plan



Land Use Planning and a Comprehensive Plan

Why are they Important?

Land use planning guides how a city is laid out. This includes what areas are zoned for (residential, commercial and industrial uses), how buildings and facilities will be designed, and infrastructure (roadways, sidewalks, water, sanitary/storm sewer, and utility lines). By overseeing these facets, land use planning makes a community a functional, pleasant place to live. Public participation and factual knowledge of the community are used to guide population and job growth, manage infrastructure investments, and provide for good development. Done well, land use planning is what maintains the important balance between protecting property rights and stewarding a community's character and environment. This usually results in increased property values and economic development, as well as more housing and transportation choices for all. Planning makes communities cohesive and efficient.



In a garden or farm someone would likely put tomatoes in one area, corn in another, potatoes in another, and other crops elsewhere. Such decision might be based on the amount of sunlight, the soil types, or the moisture one can expect for different areas. In the arrangement of communities as well, there needs to be a system that arranges uses to give each its best advantage.

In a household there needs to be eating areas, sitting areas, bathrooms, kitchens, recreational areas and the like. It would not be advantageous to have all of the chairs in one bedroom, or to have someone permanently place the garbage next to the dining room table. For land uses also, a system is needed to ensure logical and efficient placement of uses, and that incompatible uses are not placed together.

When it comes to gardening, farming, and the arrangement of a household, one individual or one family can accomplish such tasks on their own, as the entire operation belongs to them. In a city there are property owners, businesses, public institutions, and many other competing interests. This is why a community-wide land use planning system is needed.

The foundation of land use planning in any city or county in Oregon is the comprehensive plan. Among other things, a comprehensive plan includes a land use designation map. The text of the plan contains somewhat broad goals and policies which reflect the community's values. Comprehensive plans are often supplemented by more specific supporting documents such as utility plans, transportation plans, and plans for particular neighborhoods. The development code is used to implement the aims of the comprehensive plan and other associated plans, with detailed zoning and development laws specifying how development will look and fit within the community.

Comprehensive plans are required by the State of Oregon. Every surrounding city, old and new, has developed a comprehensive plan. Citizens of Damascus have the unique opportunity to affirm or reject their own plan and determine the fate of their community.

Benefits of a Comprehensive Plan

The homeowner on his or her own land

- Nothing changes that affects a person's ability to use or enjoy his or her property just as they do today.
- New businesses can locate in the community providing goods and services.
- New community facilities including parks, community centers, and schools can be developed.
- Roads and sidewalks can be improved.



The homeowner concerned with what happens on nearby land

- Development of new neighborhoods with housing and businesses will have high standards of design that will contribute to attractive, vibrant places.
- New development in existing or legacy neighborhoods will be limited and of a similar size to lots in these neighborhoods.
- Development standards protect Damascus' rural character, wildlife habitat, buttes and streams.
- Buffers are created to help protect existing residents from the negative effects of commercial and industrial uses.

The homeowner or property owner wanting to create and maintain value

- Property wealth goes up as the city grows and property becomes available for urban development.
- Property wealth is protected with high standards of design for new development.

A person wishing to sell to a developer

- Ability to develop urban land uses.
- Flexibility to allow for the changing business needs of the marketplace.
- The extension of infrastructure (water, sewer, roads) allows for development.
- An efficient approval process helps keep costs predictable.

Details of the Comprehensive Plan can be found on the City's Website at www.damascusoregon.gov

Charter Amendment Protections: Property Rights

Section 46. Property Rights. (a) After January 1, 2006, the City may not enact, approve or acquiesce to any land use regulation which limits or prohibits the right to use, divide, possess, sell or improve any private property in such manner as will diminish the fair market value of that property without full monetary compensation of the property owner by the City for the amount of the diminution in fair market value resulting from enactment of the land use regulation.

Your Questions Answered

Property Taxes

What does a comprehensive plan do to my property taxes? I don't want to be taxed out of my property.

In Oregon property taxes are tied to a property's assessed value and current use. Let's say you live on a three acre piece of property that gets re-zoned commercial when a comp plan passes. If you continue to live on your property like you do today, your taxes don't change based on the new commercial zoning, they continue as they have been.

If later, you develop that property for a commercial purpose that fits within the commercial zoning designation, the property is now assessed based on the new use.

Measure 50 limits assessed value from rising more than three percent per year, and ensures the assessed value of your property is based on its current use, not projected uses based on new zoning. So as long as you continue to live and use your property as you do today, your taxes based on your assessed value won't change by more than the three percent per year allowed by Measure 50.

Property Values

I want my property to go up in value. What effect will a comprehensive plan have on the value of my property?

A general rule of thumb is the more permissive the zoning on a piece of property the more valuable that property will be. However, predicting property values is extremely tricky, so we cannot say for sure.

Damascus currently has Clackamas County zoning, a holdover from before incorporation. Most land in Damascus is in rural zones that mainly allow acreages, agriculture, and/or logging. Having city zoning instead of rural county zoning can increase property values as city-level zoning usually allows a more intense level of potential site development. The increase in property values associated with city zoning, regardless of an owner's personal plans for a property, relates to how a property's value comes from the maximum development potential under its zoning.

Without a comprehensive plan, most areas will remain in a rural zone and with limited development opportunities.



Your Questions Answered



Home-based Businesses

“Family is important to us, so my wife has been working from home the last few years to be with our young children. Would she be allowed to continue to do this under the new comprehensive plan?”

Yes, home based businesses are encouraged. Any home based business currently operating would be allowed to continue as it does today. Home-based businesses are allowed in all residential zones provided they meet a few standards to ensure their compatibility with residential areas. (Development Code Section 17.201.090 E)

Taxes:

Unless you choose to develop your land, your property taxes will not be affected by the passage of a comprehensive plan.

Interim Development

“We’ve got 6 acres in Damascus and have always wanted to build a home for our daughter and her family on our land. Can we do this under the proposed comprehensive plan?”

Yes, the plan allows interim development on parcels of one acre or larger. Where public sewer or water are not available, this plan gives you the opportunity to develop your property to a limited extent on septic and new or existing wells, provided septic is approved and well or public water is available. (Development Code Section 17.403.020)



Your Questions Answered

Hardship Dwelling

My father has been having health problems and we'd like to set up a mobile home for him on our property. Would we be able to do this?

Yes, temporary medical hardship dwellings are allowed under the plan. The State and building code minimum standards still must be met. Details can be found in the Development Code on the City's web site. (Development Code Section 17.201.090(J)).



Open Space Requirements

I've been hearing a lot of talk about the city requiring me to leave part of my property as open space. What does this mean?

If you are building a development of less than four acres in size or with a density of less than four units per acre, then there is NO open space required. However, on more than four acres, when you choose to develop to urban scale (the maximum permitted by zoning), you can use the open space required to protect the environment, create a neighborhood park, or pay a System Development Charge.

If you choose to develop at less than urban scale, or enjoy your land as it is currently, then there is no open space requirement.

Think of a city like a home. There needs to be eating areas, sitting areas, bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, and recreation areas. Open space fills the need for recreation areas and protecting the environment. Just as houses with nice yards and space on the property can be desirable, so too can cities with open space areas. (Development Code Section 17.201.040)



Your Questions Answered

Accessory Dwelling Units

I'm thinking of adding a single apartment in my back yard to rent out to a young person or to have my parents live in so they can be more involved in my children's lives. Would this be allowed?

Yes, Accessory Dwelling Units are allowed in all neighborhood zones provided applicable siting and safety regulations are met. This allows you to keep your family close or as a potential source of income for you. (Development Code Section 17.201.090(A)).

Religious Uses

My church is very important to me, and the congregation I'm a part of would like to construct a new building in the next few years. I'm concerned the comp plan may affect where our congregation would be able to meet.

The plan allows churches and houses of worship in all land use designations where other public gatherings are allowed. Groups would be free to site a new building or use an existing building in Damascus for worship, meetings, or bible studies. (Development Code Tables 17.201.020; 17.202.020; 17.203.020)

Legacy Neighborhoods

I live in a neighborhood of large lots developed years ago and don't want to see the character of my neighborhood change. Will this change my neighborhood?

Legacy Neighborhoods are protected in the comprehensive plan. New development in these areas is limited to single-family homes on lots of similar size to existing lots in the neighborhood. This provision ensures that new homes can only be built if there is a lot that is similar to the other lots within the neighborhood, preserving the character and feel of that particular neighborhood. (Development Code Table 17.201.030A)

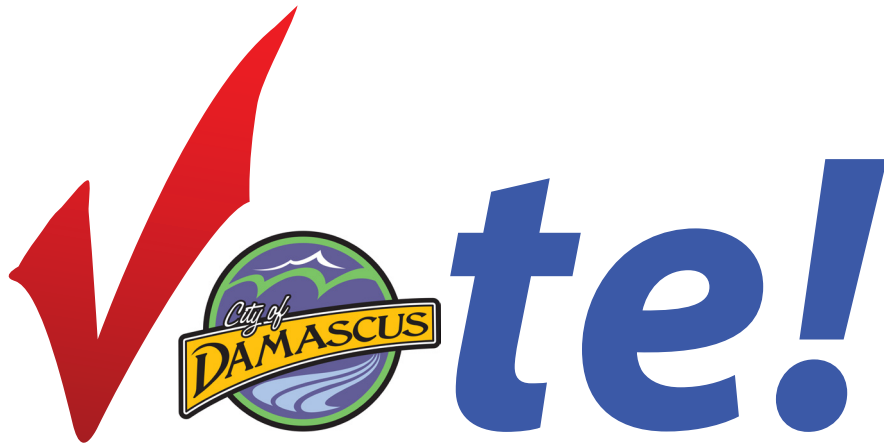




City of
Damascus

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by November 4, 2014**

**For Your Family, Your Friends, and
Your Community**